

JULY 13, 2023

# Menendez, Kaine Praise Bipartisan Committee Approval of Amendment Strengthening Australian-United Kingdom-United States Partnership



**WASHINGTON** – Today, **U.S. Senator Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee** and **U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-Va.)**, issued statements hailing the bipartisan Committee approval of an amendment that deepens the partnership between Australia, United Kingdom, and the United States (AUKUS). This amendment — now a component of the bipartisan *State Department Authorization Act of 2023* — authorizes the transfer of nuclear-powered, conventionally-armed submarines to Australia, as well as a variety of other measures to implement the AUKUS security partnership. The Biden Administration cannot transfer these submarines without legislation from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

“The AUKUS partnership enhances deterrence in the Indo-Pacific and, through the pooling of research and development resources, is spurring innovations in advanced military capabilities,” **said Chairman Menendez**. “Deepening security relations with the United Kingdom and Australia sends an important signal about the durability and strength of U.S. alliances. This amendment in the *State Authorization Act of 2023* provides Australia with a conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability and streamlines the export of U.S. military technology, while ensuring that technology is safeguarded from adversarial espionage. I’d like to thank Ranking Member Jim Risch for his support of this effort, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in both the Senate and House to pass this bill which will cement the AUKUS partnership for decades to come.”

“I take my job as Virginia’s voice on the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees very seriously. I’m working to make sure the AUKUS defense agreement strengthens our partnerships with Australia and the United Kingdom, especially in light of Chinese aggression in the South China Sea, and creates jobs and economic growth in Hampton Roads, where a significant portion of Virginia-class submarines are built. This legislation is key to paving the way for that vision. I’m also glad to have joined my colleagues in the Armed Services Committee to pass a defense bill last month that includes vital steps—including further investing in shipbuilding, improving acquisition processes, expanding defense industrial base capacity, and supporting workforce development initiatives—to ensure that the United States is able to fulfill this agreement and our other shipbuilding needs,” **said Senator Kaine, Chair of the Senate Armed Services Seapower Subcommittee**.

## **This amendment to the *State Department Authorization Act of 2023*:**

- 1.** Authorizes the transfer of two Virginia class submarines from U.S. stocks to Australia, while authorizing a third submarine for sale to Australia via the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) process
- 2.** Authorizes the President to accept funds from the Australian Government for an AUKUS Submarine Security Account
- 3.** Authorizes the export of defense services to help Australian private-sector personnel develop their own Australian submarine industrial base
- 4.** Establishes an AUKUS Senior Advisor at the State Department, who will report directly to the Secretary of State, elevating the department’s AUKUS engagement
- 5.** Grants Australia and the U.K. priority status within the FMS process, including advanced clearance for the transfer of AUKUS-related technologies to Australia and the United Kingdom to speed up the FMS process
- 6.** Eases the granting of an exemption to commercial export controls for Australia and the United Kingdom so long as the Secretary of State certifies that their export control regimes are comparable to that of the United States

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